

## M A R T H A K O N G S G A A R D



July 6, 2012

Puget Sound Partnership friends,

I am writing to let you know that Gov. Chris Gregoire today appointed retired Army Corps of Engineers Col. Anthony Wright to lead the Puget Sound Partnership. Wright is currently a vice president at Normandeau Associates, a consulting firm specializing in environmental issues, and will be taking a leave of absence to serve as director of PSP. Those of us who have been laboring in the field of Puget Sound restoration certainly recognize Tony, in his role as the district engineer and commander of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District, as an outspoken advocate and a practical but visionary leader around issues pertaining to the recovery of this national treasure. At the Corps. while overseeing 1000 employees and an annual budget of over \$650M, he served as a vocal and active member of the Ecosystem Coordination Board and the Puget Sound Federal Caucus. His 25 years of engineering, management, and regulatory experience throughout the United States and abroad coupled with his long standing passion for Puget Sound make him an obvious choice for director during the implementation phase of our region's recovery plan.

As he joins us at the helm, we say good bye to Gerry O'Keefe who came aboard as the deputy director of the Partnership in March of 2010 and who rose to director in February of last year. During his important tenure, Gerry brought a steady hand to the Partnership, especially internally, overseeing the development of the crucial performance management and accountability functions for the region's recovery work. He has hired a full complement of expert internal managers making our operations run professionally and a group of the region's best-in-class environmental specialists whose work in the field brings capacity to jurisdictions and governments as they link to a single agreed upon plan for recovery, the Action Agenda. The team assembled under his leadership works with expertise, deep passion, and to acknowledged great effect. He also aggressively led the region in a process to reach a first of its kind agreement about what we mean by 'a recovered Puget Sound' and developed the methodology to measure our progress against it. Finally, Gerry has guided the complex public and scientific process of up-dating the Action Agenda, the road map to recovery, which is now, mid-summer, nearly complete. We wish him the very best. He will be missed.

With Gerry leaving and Col. Wright joining us, we take pause to consider how far we have come and how far we have yet to go. The signature work of this generation of Puget Sound inhabitants is to break with the traditional and widely accepted historical distinctions between people and the environment, markets and ecological health and to restore resilience to the ecosystem we all depend upon. This work will not be complete in our life time; not under the leadership of our current Puget Sound champion, Governor Gregoire, nor seven governors hence. This is a never-ending project, let us not kid ourselves.

Now, as into the future, it does or does not get done because of the Partnership's very talented and dedicated staff, remarkable and devoted Boards, Panels and Scientists, and the legions of concerned and engaged citizen partners who ring this stunning estuary and who work for both the present and for those we will never know, but who are coming whether we plan for them and safeguard this place or not. We all deserve what Jane Jacobs called a **durable prosperity**, a resiliency that expresses equally our rights and responsibilities to each other in a world with a reduced carrying capacity. This announcement, although of great import in the moment and to the people involved, is a mere punctuation mark in the long horizon ahead of us. We need to get back at it today and everlasting by keeping our eyes on the prize – the protection of this national treasure, what some call *Cascadia* or *Salmon Nation* or to paraphrase the author Tim Egan, *any place that salmon can get to*, or what Wm. Dietrich calls “a universe in a mountain cradle,” this geographers’ delight, Puget Sound, the Salish Sea - out at least seven generations.

Feel free to give me a call any time or e mail me with any concerns you have during this time. And thank you for the role you play in this effort. It will take all of us.

Martha

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C H A I R , L E A D E R S H I P C O U N C I L   P U G E T S O U N D P A R T N E R S H I P  
[martha@kongsgaard-goldman.org](mailto:martha@kongsgaard-goldman.org)